

Jodi McKay

Minister for Tourism
Minister for the Hunter
Minister for Small Business
Minister for Science and Medical Research
Minister Assisting the Minister for Health (Cancer)



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CANCER DEATH RATES CONTINUE TO FALL IN NSW

Minister Assisting the Minister for Health (Cancer) Jodi McKay today launched a new report revealing that cancer death rates continue to fall in NSW.

“Cancer death rates have fallen by 14 per cent in men and 8 per cent in women over the past decade, according to the latest data in the Cancer Institute NSW’s annual Cancer Incidence and Mortality (CIM) report,” Ms McKay said.

“I welcome this good news, but there’s no room for complacency,

“The Rees Government is committed to the fight against cancer, as well as providing world-class health care to the people of NSW and supporting carers,” Ms McKay said.

“The CIM report reveals the number of people diagnosed with cancer has increased, and that the State’s most common – lung and bowel cancer, and melanoma - may be avoided in the future through better lifestyle choices.

“The Cancer Institute advises there are several reasons for the increased incidence of cancer such as our aging population, improvements in cancer detection, and the ongoing impact of tobacco, obesity and other lifestyle factors.

“The message is clear. You can reduce your risk of getting cancer by doing simple things such as not smoking, eating healthy food, limiting alcohol consumption, exercising, protecting yourself from the sun and having regular cancer screening.”

Ms McKay said prostate cancer was now the most common cancer in NSW and accounted for 20 per cent of all cancers.

“Since prostate specific antigen (PSA) testing began in 1990, death rates from prostate cancer have fallen 20 per cent,” Ms McKay said.

“Breast cancer mortality rates have declined from 1997 to 2006 by 14 per cent demonstrating the value of early detection through breast screening.

“The Rees Government is delighted to have funded the Statewide rollout of the digital mammogram machines to enhance the important BreastScreen program,” Ms McKay said.

“But I’m very concerned lung cancer is increasing in women - reflecting past and present smoking, and is now equal to breast cancer as a cause of cancer deaths in women.

“In fact, lung cancer deaths remain the major cause of cancer death overall.”

Ms McKay said bowel cancer incidence was now higher in Australia than anywhere else in the world.

“Obesity, poor diet, lack of exercise, smoking and alcohol are all related to the incidence of bowel cancer,” Ms McKay said.

“Again, I urge people to have those important checkups because early diagnosis is the most important factor in surviving bowel cancer,” Ms McKay said.

“Sadly, around two-thirds of bowel cancer cases are diagnosed after the cancer has already spread.”

Ms McKay said the CIM report also showed melanoma incidence rates continued to increase significantly in both males and females.

“But I’m pleased cervical cancer rates continue to decline – mainly because of more women having pap tests,” Ms McKay said.

“The Rees Government will continue the fight against cancer and I urge everyone across the State to reduce their own risk by making healthy lifestyle changes.”

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Major Findings

- **Prostate cancer** is the most common cancer in NSW. In 2006, there were 6,158 new cases of prostate cancer diagnosed in NSW and 982 deaths.
- **Bowel cancer** is the second most common cancer in men and women. In 2006, 4,710 new cases were diagnosed in NSW and there were 1,690 deaths.
- **Melanoma** rates increased across almost all ages, with overall rates in the ten years to the end of 2006 up 18.5% in males and up 16.7% in females.
- **Lung cancer** remains the leading cause of cancer death in NSW. There were 2,486 deaths from lung cancer in NSW in 2006. Lung cancer is now equal with **breast cancer** as the leading cause of cancer deaths in women.
- **In 2006** there were 35,159 new cases of cancer diagnosed in NSW and 13,103 cancer deaths. These numbers are projected to increase in 2008 to 38,807 new cases and 13,576 deaths from cancer.